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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 000637

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SUBJECT: GOA OFFICIAL ON CAIRNS PIF GOALS  
  
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Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR JAMES F. COLE. REASON: 1.4 (C)

¶1. (C) Summary: DFAT Pacific Division, First Assistant Secretary Richard Rowe, told Polcouns on July 9 that the GOA, New Zealand and most PIF members do not want the Fiji issue to dominate the August forum. Rowe said that Prime Minister Rudd is strongly emphasizing a "pragmatic, forward thinking" exchange on donor coordination in the Pacific, both in the PIF members discussions and in the Post Forum Dialogue. He added that the GOA looks forward to a strong U.S. contribution in the PDF discussions on improving donor coordination. Head of the DFAT Engagement Strategy Task Force Stephen Waters said that there would be a meeting of the quadrilateral security group during the PIF, likely on August 6 morning. End summary.

GOA PREPARING FOR PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

¶2. (U) Richard Rowe, DFAT Pacific Division First Assistant Secretary, DFAT Pacific Partnerships Taskforce Assistant Secretary Stephen Waters, and DFAT Director of the Pacific Regional Section Matthew Neuhaus met with Polcouns, to discuss next month's Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), including Australia's objectives for the PIF. In preparation for developing support for Australian objectives, Deputy Secretary David Ritchie is currently traveling to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Islands Affairs Duncan Kerr is also traveling in the region (including to the Compact States) this week to discuss the upcoming PIF.

DETERMINED FIJI WILL NOT DOMINATE FORUM DISCUSSION

¶3. (C) Rowe stated that in Australia's view - as well as the views of New Zealand and most of the Pacific Island countries, Fiji should not be the dominant topic of discussion during the forum. While the issue of Fiji will be discussed of course, there are other issues equally important. This view was reinforced by FM Smith to Prime Minister Tuilaepa during a trip to Samoa last month. Other issues that the GOA wants to be discussed during the PIF include climate change, for which the GOA is developing a policy paper for the region, fisheries, sports exchanges and public sector management. Rowe added that Bainimarama will be attending this week's Melanesian Spearhead Group meeting for discussions. Rowe said that the GOA is concerned that Bainimarama will influence the Melanesian members to come to the PIF urging a softer approach to Fiji. "We have to hold this back." Rowe said.

RUDD SEES NEED FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

¶4. (SBU) Rowe stated that PM Rudd is concerned with fostering and developing economic "resilience" in the Pacific Islands, and to that end the GOA and the GNZ are developing an analytical report detailing the impact of the global economic crisis on the Pacific Islands, and whether or not they will reach their millennium development goals. Rowe said that at this point they "are not tracking well." The GOA and GNZ are also developing a tracking document that will look at governance and suggest ways to improve development coordination in the region. The report is at an advanced stage in its drafting Rowe said, and will be provided to PIF leaders and PIF partners in a few weeks time.

POST FORUM DIALOGUE THEME: BETTER DONOR COORDINATION

¶5. (C) Rudd wants to reenergize the Post Forum Dialogue and Q5. (C) Rudd wants to reenergize the Post Forum Dialogue and make it more substance than "ritual," Rowe said. To this end, the GOA wants to "restructure" the PFD to include an active exchange between the PIF members, the partner countries and representatives from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Rowe noted that the President of the ADB will be attending the forum. Rowe added that Prime Minister Rudd would like to see China and India take active part in this discussion. Neuhaus stated that the GOA is looking for a "buy-in" from the U.S. on how to move forward on improving donor coordination as well as greater transparency in data and information sharing.

¶6. (C) Waters said that there would be a meeting of the quadrilateral Pacific security group (U.S., Australia, New Zealand and France) during the PIF, likely on August 6

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morning. He noted that he was aware of U.S. "reservations" about whether to form a second security body and looked forward to discussing the issue of a second mechanism (or expanding the present one) to handle "non-traditional" security concerns in the region.

CLUNE

Determined .